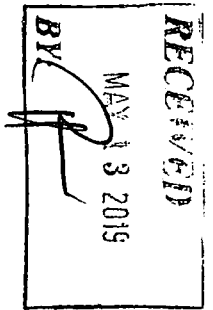


ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039

VETBOARD.AZ.GOV



COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: May 13, 2019 Case Number: 19-76

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Alexa Wilson

Premise Name: Vistancia Animal Hospital

Premise Address: 28570 N. El Mirage Rd, Suite 104

City: Peoria State: AZ Zip Code: 85383

Telephone: 623-888-8108

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Mike & Susan Ballard

Address: [redacted]

City: [redacted] State: [redacted] Zip Code: [redacted]

Home Telephone: [redacted] Cell Telephone: [redacted]

*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: Buddy
Breed/Species: Papillon
Age: 13 Sex: Male Color: Black & White

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: n/a
Breed/Species: _____
Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

VetMed Emergency Hospital
20610 N Cave Creek Rd
Phoenix, AZ. 85024
602-697-4694

Animal Medical Center of Surprise
Dr. Mel Paquin

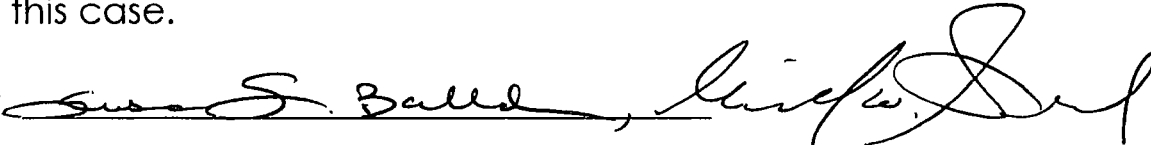
E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

Michael & Susan Ballard

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: 

Date: 05.03.19

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

Buddy was scheduled for a dental procedure at Vistancia Animal Hospital on March 22, 2019. I received a call on March 21st stating that I needed to bring him in that day because they needed to do blood work before the dental and needed a day to get the results. I thought it was odd that they waited until the day before the dental to call me, as if the blood work was an after thought. I could not take him in on the 21st, so I rescheduled the dental for a week later, March 29th. I took him in before that day so they could draw blood. During my initial visit with Dr. Wilson, I asked about heart worm preventative for Buddy. She told me that they could give him a 6 month shot, since he wouldn't chew anything. She said they could take care of that during the dental procedure.

When I brought Buddy in on March 29th at 7:20am, he had not had anything to eat since the night before, so his stomach was empty. I met with a tech (never saw the vet) and we discussed the dental. At that time, I asked about the heart worm preventative and was told that they would go ahead and give him the 6 month shot. I specifically questioned her about giving him the preventative without testing him first. I was told that they give the preventative even if they don't have the test results back yet. I told her that I have always been told that could harm the dog. So, it was decided that no heart worm preventative would be given before I spoke directly with Dr. Wilson.

I received a call from Dr. Wilson before she started the dental on Buddy and I asked her about giving the heart worm preventative before testing. She told me that even if the dog had heart worm that the preventative is used in the treatment of heart worm, so it would be safe to give him the shot. I told her this was contrary to everything I had ever heard about heart worm, but trusted her.

When we went to pick Buddy up around 5pm, they told me there was a delay because they were "cleaning him up." I asked at that time, "Did he throw up?" The tech told me no, he had not thrown up, but sometimes they get things on his fur and they are just cleaning him up. They carried him out and handed him to me. As I held him in my arms, I noticed he was breathing very fast. I asked the tech at that time, "Why is he breathing so fast." She told me, "Oh, he is just excited to see you." I thought, well okay, these people work with animals all the time. I knew the dog would be stressed from having the dental procedure, so I trusted once again.

As the night went on, Buddy's breathing became faster and more and more labored. He kept holding his head up and struggling to breath. I watched him and held him for hours not knowing if this was normal, since I was told this at Vistancia Animal Hospital, or if my dog really needed help. Finally at about 2am, I called Vistancia Animal Hospital and received a recorded message telling me to take the dog to VetMed if I felt I had an emergency. I took him to VetMed and, after examining Buddy, they told us he had aspiration pneumonia from getting water in his lungs during the dental procedure. He spent 24 hours under the care of VetMed, staying in an oxygen tent and being given fluids and medicine via IV treatments.

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS continued

We trusted Vistancia Animal Hospital and their staff with the care of our dog. We trusted them when they told us he had not thrown up and that his breathing was just fast because he was excited to see us. We trusted them when they told us the heart worm preventative is used in the treatment of heartworm. We trusted them when they did the dental procedure to make sure they were taking the proper precautions to make sure they were not getting water into his lungs.

We want to make sure that no other pet owner goes thru what we and our dog has had to endure. We would also like to request reimbursement for all of the expenses for this ordeal. These are the expenses:

Vistancia Animal Hospital / 03.29.19	\$ 506.64
VetMed / 03.31.19	\$1,759.69
Animal Medical Center of Surprise / 04.01.19	\$ 213.43
Animal Medical Center of Surprise / 04.08.19	\$ 265.65
Animal Medical Center of Surprise / 04.22.19	<u>\$ 265.65</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	<u>\$3,011.06</u>

On Friday March 29th, Buddy Ballard presented for a dental cleaning procedure. At the start of my shift at 8:00 am, I performed a physical exam on Buddy which was normal apart from dental calculus and bilateral lenticular sclerosis. I called the owners with a morning update, at which time I told the owner that per the ProHeart rep, it was safe to give the ProHeart injection as the heartworm preventative part of treatment for heartworm disease, but if his test came back negative additional treatment would be needed. I advised her that we would run an in house heartworm test while Buddy was under anesthesia and that we would collect urine to send out for a urinalysis.

During that time, the technicians placed an IV catheter and IV fluids were started prior to the anesthetic procedure. At 10:40 am Buddy was premeditated with buprenorphine and atropine subcutaneously. At 11:00 am, Buddy was anesthetized using propofol intravenously and intubated with an endotracheal tube by Savannah. The cuff of the tube was inflated and leak checked by Savannah breathing for Buddy while I listened for air flow at his mouth. Buddy was placed in lateral recumbency with a towel under his head to angle the mouth down. Monitoring equipment was connected and then the dental cleaning was performed. While Savannah cleaned the teeth, I collected urine via cystocentesis and blood from the lateral saphenous vein for the in house heartworm test, which was negative. After Savannah finished cleaning the teeth, I extracted 2 lower incisors without complication. Throughout the entire procedure, Buddy was stable. He was found to have feces in his colon was likely affecting his temperature, but a warming water blanket, multiple thick blankets, and warmies were used as a precaution. After the procedure was done, Buddy was extubated with no issues noticed. Buddy was then given his ProHeart injection. Buddy was monitored until his discharge at which point he was bright, alert, and responsive.

Alexa Wilson
Alexa Wilson, DVM



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VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: PM Investigative Committee: Adam Almaraz - Chair
Amrit Rai, DVM
Christine Butkiewicz, DVM
William Hamilton
Brian Sidaway, DVM

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Dawn Halbrook, Compliance Specialist
Sunita Krishna Cairo, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 19-76

Complainant(s): Mike and Susan Ballard

Respondent(s): Alexa Wilson, DVM (License: 7121)

SUMMARY:

Complaint Received at Board Office: 5/13/19

Committee Discussion: 7/2/19

Board IIR: 8/21/9

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

Laws as Amended August 2018

(Lime Green); Rules as Revised

September 2013 (Yellow)

On March 29, 2019, "Buddy," a 13-year-old neutered male Papillon was presented to Respondent for a dental cleaning. The procedure was performed and the dog was discharged later that day. Complainants had concerns the dog's respirations were abnormal at discharge but were advised the dog was fine.

In the early morning of March 30, 2019, the dog was presented to an emergency facility where he was diagnosed with aspiration pneumonia and was hospitalized for care and treatment.

Complainants were noticed and did not appear.

Respondent was noticed and did not appear.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Mike and Susan Ballard*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Alexa Wilson, DVM*
- Consulting Veterinarian(s) narrative/medical record: *VETMED; and Animal Medical Center of Surprise.*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On March 6, 2019, the dog was presented to Respondent for a new client exam. The dog had been licking his paws for one week – Complainants had been administering the dog Claritin. The dog was examined; grade IV dental calculus with gingivitis was noted and a dental was recommended along with Apoquel and Cytopoint. Cytopoint was declined and the dog was discharged with Apoquel.

2. On March 26, 2019, the dog was presented to Respondent for blood collection in preparation for the dental procedure. Abnormal results were:

SDMA	16	0 – 14
BUN	42	9 - 31
ALB	2.1	2.7 – 3.9
ALB/GLOB	0.6	0.7 – 1.5

3. On March 27, 2019, Respondent contacted Complainants with the blood results and recommended a urinalysis and starting IV fluids as soon as dropped off for the dental procedure. She further recommended rechecking the kidney values in 6 months. Complainants believed the dog had elevated kidney values in the past and approved the urinalysis.

4. On March 29, 2019, the dog was presented to Respondent for a dental procedure. Upon exam, the dog had a weight = 5.90 pounds, a temperature = 101 degrees, a heart rate = 150bpm and a respiration rate = 40rpm. According to Respondent, she contacted Complainants and advised that it was safe to administer ProHeart injection as the heartworm preventative part of treatment for heartworm disease, but if the dog's test came back negative additional treatment would be needed. Respondent explained that a heartworm test would be performed while the dog was under anesthesia and a urine sample would be collected and submitted to the lab for testing.

5. An IV catheter was placed and LRS fluids were started at 12mL/hr. The dog was pre-medicated with atropine and buprenex SQ; induced with propofol IV and maintained on isoflurane and oxygen. Respondent stated that the dog was intubated by staff -- the cuff of the tube was inflated and leaked checked by staff breathing for the dog while Respondent listened for air flow at his mouth. The dog was placed in lateral recumbency with a towel under his head to angle the mouth down. While staff cleaned the dog's teeth, Respondent collected a urine sample via cystocentesis and blood for the in-house heartworm test; heartworm test = negative.

6. After staff cleaned the dog's teeth, Respondent extracted two lower incisors (which teeth extracted were not documented in medical record). The surgical monitoring sheet shows the first recorded vitals at 11:10am and the next vital recording was at 11:30am, 20 minutes later. Arizona Administrative Code R3-11-502 (H)(3) requires HR and RR to be recorded every 15 minutes. At the end of the procedure, the dog's temperature was recorded as 96 degrees. Respondent stated in her narrative that feces was found in the dog's colon and was likely contributing to the hypothermia. A warming water blanket, multiple thick blankets and warmies were used as a precaution.

7. After the procedure, the dog was extubated with no issues noticed. The dog was given his ProHeart injection and was monitored until he was discharged later that day. The dog was sent

home with Amoxi/Clav suspension and Gabapentin suspension.

8. Upon discharge, as Complainants held the dog they noticed he was breathing very fast. When asked why, they were told it was due to the dog being excited to see them. According to staff member, Savannah, when she brought the dog to Complainants, they commented that the dog's heart was racing. Savannah responded that he was excited to see them.

9. In the early morning of March 30, 2019, Complainants were concerned with the dog's breathing and called Respondent's premise. They were directed to VETMED if there was an emergency with their pet.

10. Upon arrival at VETMED, Dr. Goff evaluated the dog due to concerns of elevated respiratory rate, lethargy and inappetence following a dental procedure performed earlier that day. Upon exam, Dr. Goff noted the dog had a mild fever, increased respiratory rate with slight respiration effort and mild right-sided crackles on auscultation. Thoracic radiographs were taken and were consistent with aspiration pneumonia. Based on these findings, hospitalization was recommended and approved.

11. An IV catheter was placed, fluids were started as well as antibiotics, an antiemetic, analgesic, and supplemental oxygen. The dog was stable overnight and was transferred to the daytime doctor, Dr. Grant, for care. Dr. Grant stated the dog showed signs of improvement and was discharged the evening of March 31, 2019 due to the financial constraints of the pet owners.

12. On April 1, 2019, the dog was presented to Dr. Paquin at Animal Medical Center of Surprise for evaluation after emergency treatment. Dr. Paquin performed periodic rechecks, blood work and radiographs. The dog continued to improve each visit.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed that during a dental procedure water is being introduced into a pet's mouth therefore aspiration pneumonia is possible and is a known risk/complication. However, the aspiration could have occurred post-anesthesia/post-extubation.

The Committee discussed that the dog was looked at while in the kennel prior to being released to the pet owner. However, it appears staff did not relay to Respondent that Complainants expressed concern with the dog's respirations.

The Committee did not have any concerns with Pro-Heart administration as the dog was tested for heartworm prior.

The Committee noted medical record keeping issues.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that possible violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

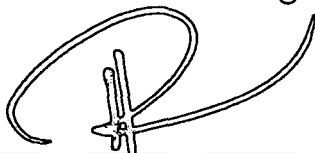
Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board find:

ARS § 32-2232 (21) as it relates to AAC R3-11-502:

- *(H) (3) failure to document the animal's heart rate and respiration rate every 15 minutes while anesthesia is being administered; and*
- *(L) (6) failure to document in the medical record which incisors were extracted from the dog's mouth.*

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy A. Riendeau', is written over a horizontal line.

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR



VICTORIA WHITMORE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

1740 W. ADAMS STREET, SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1-PET FAX (602) 364-1039

CERTIFIED MAIL
7016301000000098692

September 16, 2019

Alexa Wilson, DVM
ADDRESS ON FILE

LETTER OF CONCERN – 19-76 - In Re: Alexa Wilson, DVM

Dear Dr. Wilson:

At its meeting on August 21, 2019, the Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board considered information presented in the complaint case brought by Mike and Susan Ballard regarding their dog "Buddy" that had been presented to you for a dental procedure.

In each case, the Board considers the situation and the professional's response, as well as all relevant information. In this matter, after review and discussion, the Board voted to issue you a Letter of Concern pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-2234(D) regarding the need for more thorough communication and ensuring that staff is relaying the concerns of pet owners to the veterinarian.

A Letter of Concern is defined in A.R.S. § 32-2201(12) as "...an advisory letter to notify a veterinarian that, while there is insufficient evidence to support disciplinary action about certain aspects of the case, the Board believes the veterinarian should modify or eliminate certain practices and that continuation of the activities that led to the information being submitted to the Board may result in action against the veterinarian's license."

We hope you will take this advisory letter in the spirit that it is intended to avoid any other potential violations in the future.

Respectfully,
FOR THE BOARD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Whitmore".

Victoria Whitmore
Executive Director

cc: Mike and Susan Ballard